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Levant

The Journal of the Council for British Research in the Levant

ISSN: 0075-8914 (Print) 1756-3801 (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ylev20

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To cite this article: Moshe Fischer (1986) THE CORINTHIAN CAPITALS OF THE CAPERNAUM SYNAGOGUE: A REVISION, Levant, 18:1, 131-142, DOI: 10.1179/lev.1986.18.1.131

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1179/lev.1986.18.1.131

Published online: 29 Nov 2013.

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Levant, Vol. XVIII (1986)

THE CORINTHIAN CAPITALS OF THE CAPERNAUM SYNAGOGUE: A REVISION

by Moshe Fischer

Tel-Aviv University, Tel-Aviv, Israel

In recent years the debate over the dating of the "early-type Galilean" synagogue has been renewed and conducted with greater intensity than ever.[1] Since the beginning of research on this subject it has been recognized that the builders of these synagogues based their designs on classical Graeco-Roman architectural principles[2] and, at the same time, were also strongly influenced by the architectural and ornamental features of the many pagan buildings that existed in neighbouring Syria and Lebanon during the Hellenistic and Roman periods (Kohl and Watzinger 1916: 147–173).[3] Research on these synagogues has concentrated mainly on their architectural design, including metrological and artistic aspects.[4] Moreover, recently there has been a notable increase of archaeological data, following excavations at a number of synagogue sites in Galilee and on the Golan Heights.[5]

A most promising approach toward a solution of these dating problems is suggested by the ornamental elements of the Capernaum synagogue which are exceptionally rich and varied (Kohl and Watzinger 1916: 147–173; Orfali 1922).[6] Because of the tendency of ornamental remains to become detached from their building contexts, it is usually difficult to assign individual remains to specific building phases. Yet, in most cases where ornamental remains are found at a site (especially when found in quantity together), it is possible to assert that these remains formed an integral part of the original structure (or structures) at this site.

Therefore, it seems appropriate to re-address the question of the dating of the Corinthian capitals of the Capernaum synagogue, especially as this synagogue has become a touchstone issue in the debate over the "early-type Galilean" synagogues. Unquestionably these capitals can substantially help to clarify the chronological picture of the architectural ornament of this synagogue.[7] While there is no thought of making these capitals the sole dating criterion for the Capernaum synagogue, their assignment within the chronological scheme of Hellenistic-Roman art has undeniable relevance. In excavations conducted several years ago the synagogue was dated, on basis of finds and stratigraphic considerations, to after the beginning of the fifth century C.E. Since, this dating was not universally accepted, and it was agreed at the time that only further excavation could secure a more definitive dating. These too approved the earlier conclusions.[8] Recently the same late dating (i.e. after the beginning

[1] Y. Tsafrir, *Cathedra* 20 (1981), 29–46 (Hebrew); cf. different articles in the collection of L. I. Levine (ed.), *Ancient Synagogues Revealed* (Jerusalem, 1981). See also the useful collection of historical and archaeological material concerning Palestinian synagogues of F. Hüttenmeister and G. Reeg, *Antike Synagogen in Israel I–II* (Wiesbaden, 1977).

[2] Revealed recently by D. Chen, *Liber Annuus* 28 (1978), 193–202; *idem*, *Liber Annuus* 30 (1980), 255–258; he considered the problem of the Galilean synagogues in a paper dealing with the earlier synagogues from Masada and Herodion: *BASOR* 239 (1980), 37–40.

[3] G. Foerster, *Galilean Synagogues and their Relation to Hellenistic and Roman Art and Architecture* (Thesis submitted for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy) (Jerusalem, 1972) (Hebrew). A pagan site like the Roman temple at Kedesh (Upper Galilee) had a great influence on the architectural and artistical design of the surroundings, including the synagogues too. The results of the first season of excavations carried out in summer 1981 and directed by the author together with Prof. A. Ovadiah and Dr. I. Roll from the Tel Aviv University are published in *Qadmoniot* 15 (1982), 121–5 (Hebrew) and *Tel Aviv* (1984), forthcoming.

[4] For the metrological aspects see especially D. Chen (*supra*, note 2), who excludes *only* on behalf of metrological data the possibility of the erection of the synagogues of Capernaum, Bar'am, Dikke, Nabratein and Horvath Amudim in a period before the era of Constantine the Great. From the other hand, his metrological conclusions enables the dating of the synagogues of Chorazin, Ma'oz Hayim and Meiron to an earlier period; cf. D. Chen, *Liber Annuus* 28 (1978), 202; *idem*, *Liber Annuus* 30 (1980), 255–256. The artistic aspects were always taken into consideration, but, since Kohl and Watzinger, they were never concentrated and discussed within a thorough research.

[5] A good concentration of material in the collection of L. I. Levine (ed.) (note 1); for the Golan see especially Z. Ma'oz, apud L. I. Levine, op. cit., 98–115. For recently excavated Galilean synagogues see infra note 10.

[6] These aspects were also often revealed; S. Foerster (*supra*, note 3), 122; Tsafrir (*supra*, note 1), 33.

[7] The Corinthian capital, as a main element of the Corinthian style, is several times, and for different areas, revealed as an important factor in the dating of the architectural decorations and *implicit* of the erection and development of ancient building sites. The most important summaries are: W.-D. Heilmeyer, *Korinthische Normalkapitelle* (Heidelberg, 1970); for the East see: D. Schlumberger, *Syria* 14 (1933), which I tried to bring up to date in my thesis (Fischer 1979).

[8] V. Corbo, S. Loffreda and A. Spijkerman, *La sinagoga di Cafarnao dopo gli scavi del 1969* (Jerusalem, 1970); G. Foerster, *IEJ*, 21 (1971), 207–211 (also apud Levine, ed., note 1, 57–59); S. Loffreda, *Liber Annuus* 22 (1972), 5–29; V. Corbo, *Liber Annuus* 22 (1972), 204–235; S. Loffreda, *IEJ* 23 (1973), 37–42 (also apud Levine, ed., note 1, 52–56); cf. M. Avi-Yonah, *IEJ* 23 (1973), 43–45; *idem*, apud Levine, ed., note 1, 60–61; V. Corbo, *Liber Annuus* 27 (1977), 156–172; S. Loffreda, *Liber Annuus* 29 (1979), 215–220. For the "later" dating based on the metrological analysis, see: Chen (note 2).

of the fifth century C.E.) was likewise suggested for the Golan synagogues.[9] On the other hand, the excavations at the synagogues of Gush Halav, Horvat Ha-Amudim, Horvat Shema' and Nabratein have shown that construction of these synagogues should be dated on the third century C.E.[10] But unfortunately in these excavations only a few ornamental remains that could be dated to such an early period were found; and thus we are furnished only with little material for comparisons with such "problematical" monuments as the Capernaum synagogue.

The Corinthian capitals of the synagogue building at Capernaum are an excellent example of classical ornamental-architectural principles applied in a local context during the Roman period. I propose to distinguish between two categories according to whether the element was fashioned from local or imported stones. Thus elements from marble and other imported stones are to be classified as (East) Mediterranean "Roman Imperial art", whilst elements from local stone are to be rated "Roman provincial art". Despite the fact that the latter are not uninfluenced by the former, the "provincial art" capitals are discernibly original and distinctive. I have drawn up parallel typological tables for two categories of Corinthian capitals, from which it can be seen that despite the reciprocal influences there is no complete congruency between the two (Fischer 1979; 151–153, 268–274).

The criteria for classifying Corinthian capitals fall into two main groups: (1) affecting the arrangement and inter-relationship of the various elements making up the capital (Figs. 1–2) according to Vitruvius' (de architectura, IV, 1) nomenclature, namely *calathus*, *acanthus* leaves, *cauliculi*, *calyces*, volutes and *helices*, *abacus* with its flower; and (2) affecting working methods and artistical effects, namely use of chisel and drill and plasticity or non-plasticity. By means of these criteria it has been possible to establish a chronological-typological sequence for the local Corinthian capitals, beginning with the capitals from Horvat 'Amrit (late first or beginning of the second century C.E.), through the examples from Samaria-Sebaste-Forum (Pl. XXX), Beth She'an-theatre (Pl. XXXI), Kedesh, Upper Galilee-temple (Pl. XXXII), Samaria-Sebaste-Street, Tiberias, Antipatris, etc. to finally the late-classical Corinthian capitals dating from the third century C.E. (Fischer 1979: Nos. 254–267). The most clear-cut examples in this sequence are the capitals connected with the structures at Mambre (Beth Ilanim) (Fischer 1979: Nos. 297–299) and with the mausoleum at Mazor (Pl. XXXIII; Fischer 1979: Nos. 298–301).[11] By the same criteria the capitals from Capernaum come at the end of this sequence; they represent, in fact, the final stage in the evolution of the Corinthian capital in Palestine, which therefore dates them to the third century C.E. (see above. These capitals will be followed by the early Byzantine capitals which are completely different in design and workmanship.[12]

The decoration of the Capernaum synagogue is a typical example of the Corinthian style that was dominant in Roman architecture in the East, including Palestine, to the exclusion of virtually all other building styles. It developed according to the Classical Baroque which was suitable to Roman artistical concept.[13] However, there evolved in the fourth century C.E. an eclectic style—an odd blend of diverse styles with a perverted form of the Corinthian.[14] The repertoire of the ornamental elements of the Capernaum synagogue furnishes the basis for a more exact dating of these capitals. The Capernaum capitals fall into a number of different types. On the one hand, this differentiation may have been based on a deliberate principle, that is the different types were intended to be emplaced at different points within the scheme of the structure; whilst on the other hand it may have been due to the time factor involved in the building of this structure. We know that in antiquity major architectural undertakings as, for instance, construction of a synagogue (along with the ornamental work involved) could take many decades to complete.[15]

In spite of the fairly uniform design and work-

[9] Ma'oz (note 5), 113–115. Even without dealing here with these synagogues, I want to point out that in my opinion their artistic design is different from those of the Galilean synagogues, contrary to Tsafrir (note 1), 33.

[10] Gush Halav: E. M. Meyers, apud Levine (note 1), 75–77; Horvat Shema': *idem*, apud Levine, op. cit., 70–74 (the end of the third century C.E.); Horvat ha'Amudim: L. I. Levine, apud Levine, op. cit., 78–81 (dated through the coins to the end of the third century C.E.); Meiron: C. L. Meyers *et al.*, *BASOR* 214 (1974), 2–25 (the earliest phase seems to belong to the end of the second century C.E.); Nabratein: *Archaeological Newsletter* 74–75 (1980), 5–6 (Hebrew).

[11] E. Mader, *Mambre. Ergebnisse der Ausgrabubgen im Heiligen Bezirk Ramet el-Halil in Südpalästina 1926–1928* (Freiburg, 1957), 91–92. pl. L 71. For Mazot see now Y. Kaplan, *Eretz Israel* 18 (1985) (Hebrew).

[12] For Byzantine capitals see especially R. Kautzsch, *Kapitellstudien. Beiträge zu einer Geschichte des spätantiken Kapitells im Osten vom 4-ten bis ins 7-te Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1936); R. Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture* (Harmondsworth, 1979); Ch. Strube, *AA* (1978), 577–601. For our figures 9–10, see Kautzsch, op. cit., figs. 284 and 305.

[13] M. Lyttelton, *Baroque Architecture in Classical Antiquity* (London, 1974).

[14] Krautheimer (note 12), 94, 96; Strube (note 12), 579–581.

[15] For example the long duration of the erection and completion of the temenos at Baalbec from the middle of the first to the second half of the second century C.E., cf. Th. Wiegand (ed.), Baalbek. *Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen und Untersuchungen in den Jahren 1898 bis 1905* (Berlin, 1921–3) II, 146–147; cf. E. Weigand, *Jahrbuch fur Kunstwissenschaft* 2 (1924/25), 89–90; for the long building phases of the sanctuary of Bel at Palmyra in respect of the different capitals, see Schlumberger (note 7), 299–302.

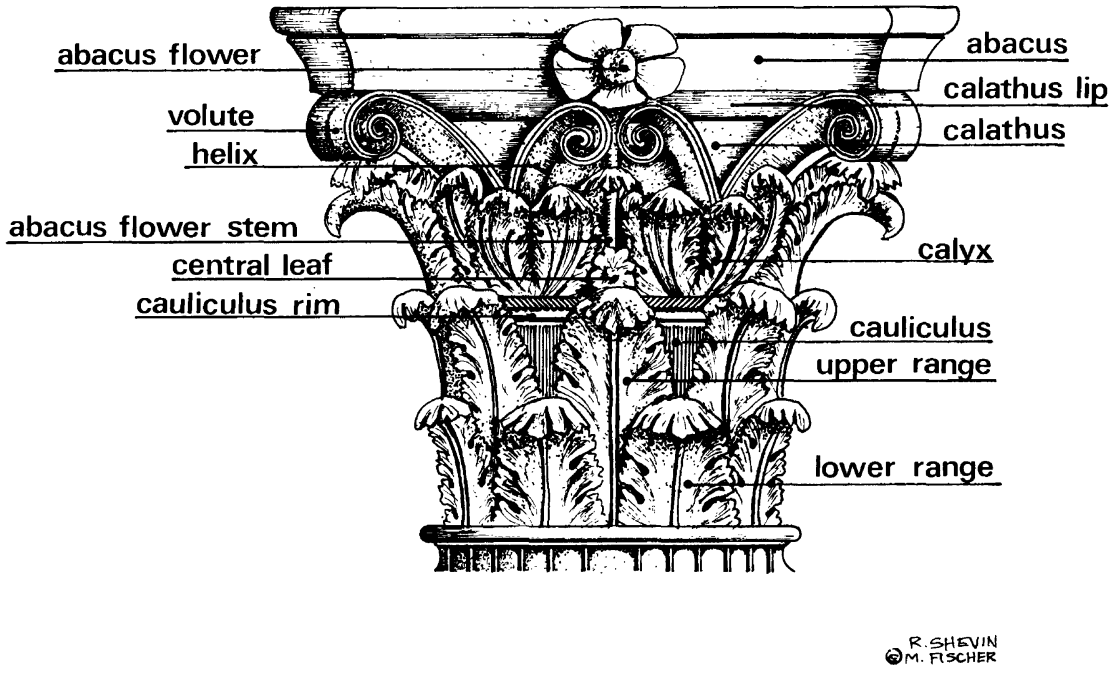


Fig. 1. The Corinthian capital. Components and nomenclature.

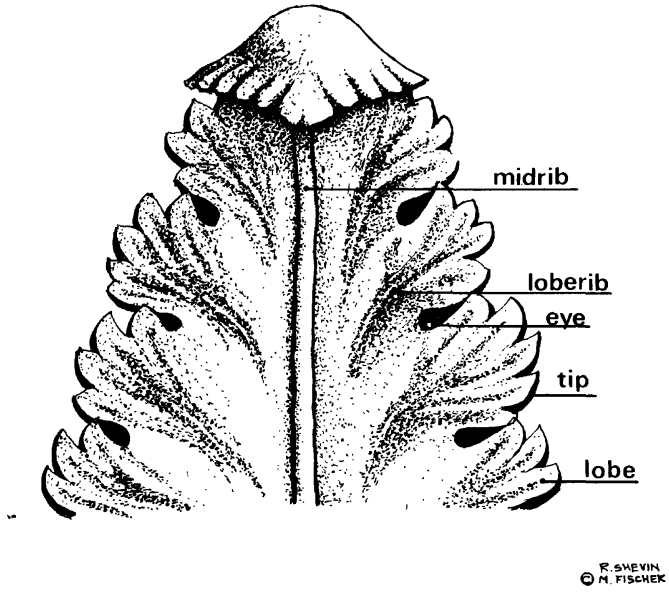


Fig. 2. The Corinthian acanthus leaf.

manship of the Capernaum capitals, 4 types may be distinguished. The distinction is based on the different design of the *cauliculi* and other elements and their different usage (i.e. as capitals of pilaster, pier or door jambs, a.s.o.).[16]

Type A (cf. Pl. XXXIV) (Kohl and Watzinger 1916:

[16] The capitals discussed here were published by Kohl and Watzinger 1916, and by Orfali 1922, as well. Further capitals, which seem to be similar to one of the groups proposed here are still in the area of the site and were not published.

Pl. XXX. Corinthian Capital from the Forum at Samaria.

figs. 44–45; Orfali 1922: fig. 22). The *cauliculi* are emphasized as a plain column holding the *calyces* directly (without a ring). The *calyces* are divided in two parts by two deep triangles while their midrib forms a kind of cup. *Calyces* of this type have appeared in the Syrian–Palestinian area from the beginning of the third century C.E. and there are many examples.[17] This combination with column-shaped *cauliculi* is rather rare at this period. It can be found in capitals antedating the Capernaum ones, such as those of Mambre, a few at Mazor (Fischer 1979: Nos. 296–297, 299) and at farther sites such as Palmyra, from the second half of the third century C.E.[18] Column-shaped *cauliculi*, growing up behind leaves are, at this period, an *archaism*, in line with the artistic concept of the local artists and craftsmen. Undoubtedly, classical models were not always faithfully copied. Moreover, there is the addition of Jewish symbols (such as *menorah* (Pl. XXXIV) *ethrog*, *lulab*, *shofar* and *mahtah*-incens shovel) which are placed, instead of the *helices*, directly on the capital itself. The capitals of this type belong to the interior of the synagogue and some to the courtyard (Kohl and Watzinger 1916: 24–26; Orfali 1922: 88–101, Figs. 120–121).

Type B (Pl. XXXV) (Kohl and Watzinger 1916: Fig. 46; Orfali 1922: Figs. 23–24). These capitals belong, according to Kohl and Watzinger, to the interior of the synagogue and one, to the heart-shaped pier in the courtyard. The *cauliculus* is completely degenerated, it is shaped as an outward accentuated triangle. This is

[17] Gerasa-Tetrapylon, C. H. Kraeling (ed.), *Gerasa. City of Decapolis* (New Haven, 1938), pl. XVIII, b; Atil, Temple of Caracalla, E. Weigand, *JDI* 29 (1914) 59, fig. 22; Aphrodisias: *idem*, 59, fig. 23; Bostra: *idem*, 70, pl. 2—dated there to the end of the second and the beginning of the third century C.E.; Sunamen-Temple of Tyche: *idem*, 59, fig. 21; for this Temple see also: L. C. Cummings, *AJA* 13 (1909), 427 (dated A.D. 191).

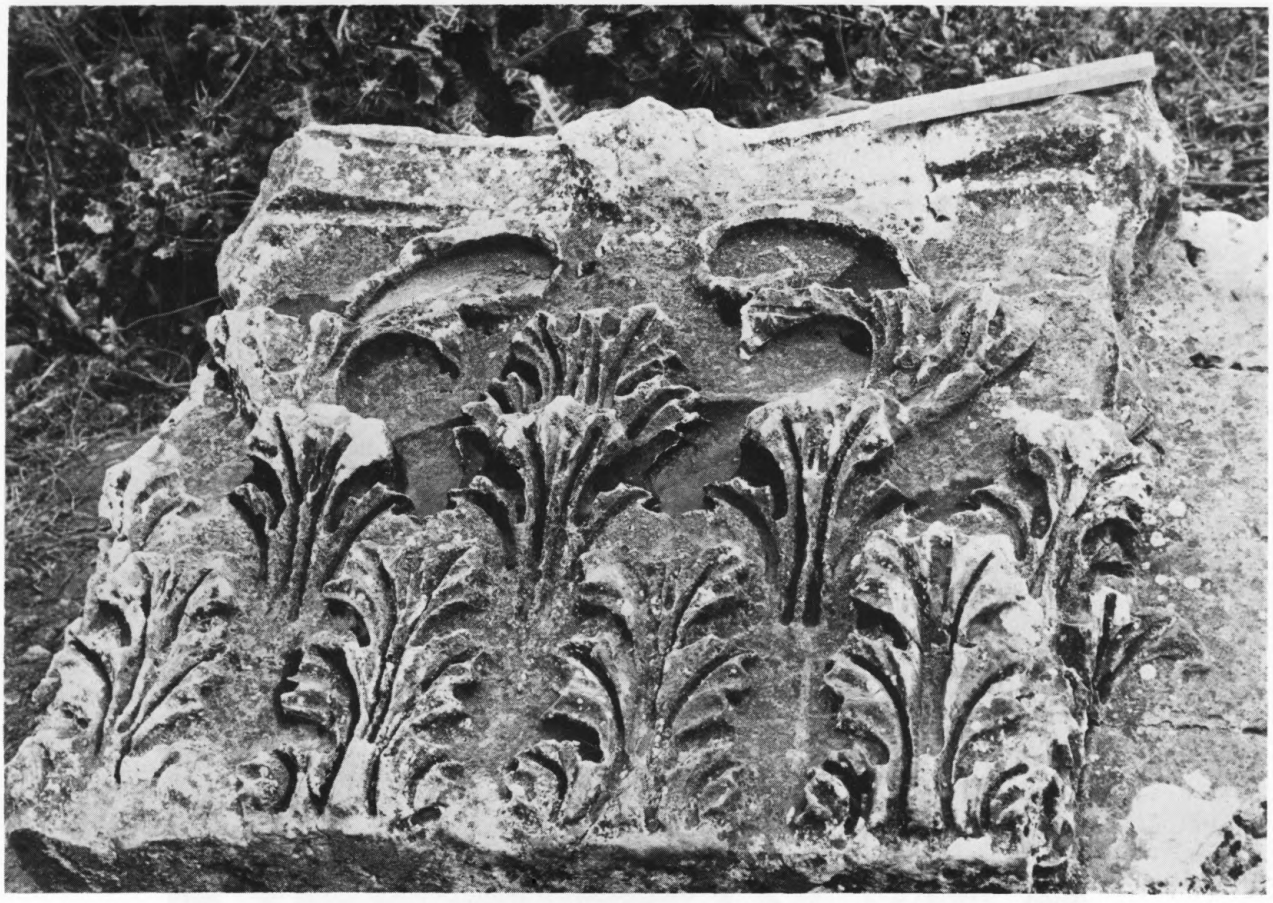
[18] E. Weigand, apud Th. Wiegand (ed.), *Palmyra. Die Ergebnisse der Expeditionen von 1902 und 1917* (Berlin, 1932), 156–157, figs. 179–180; B. Filarska, *Etudes et Travaux* (Travaux du centre d'archéologie mediterranneenne de l'Academie Polonaise des Sciences), III (Warszawa, 1966), 111–112, pl. X:1–2.

Pl. XXXI. Corinthian Capital from the Theatre at Beth-She'an.

the accepted form for stone and marble capitals during the second and third centuries C.E. The *calyces* are tall, elongated and divided by a long groove ("eye") which is quite common among these capitals (Fischer 1979: 294–309). The capital of the heart-shaped pier of the courtyard lacks a *helix*, instead of which there are accentuated symbols. Its design is similar to capitals from Palmyra, dated to the beginning of the third century C.E.[19] The shaping of the leaves is fairly similar to a capital from the synagogue of Chorazin, even if this is made of Basalt (Kohl and Watzinger 1916: Fig. 98a).[20]

[19] Weigand (note 15), 95; *idem* (note 18), 160, fig. 5.

[20] Dated to the third century C.E. by M. Avi-Yonah, *QDAP* 14 (1950), 55, pl. XVIII, 5.



Pl. XXXII. Corinthian Capital from the Temple of Kedesh.

Type C (Pl. XXXVI) (Kohl and Watzinger 1916: Fig. 53; Orfali 1922: Figs. 35–57). These capitals belong to pilasters and perhaps were part of the upper storey. They are lower than other capitals and their decorative structure is exceptional. This is a functionally different group (Kohl and Watzinger 1916: 29)[21] and even the design and workmanship of its capitals differ from other groups. Some features are developed at the expense of others. The *cauliculi* are missing in most capitals while the *helices* and volutes are heterodox, generally in an upside-down or exceptional shape (as Pl. XXXVI).[22] On some capitals the leaves cover the body in a distinctly geometricized net, while in others the bare base is visible and on it the leaves of the second row grow from among the leaves of the first row. This feature is characteristic of imported capitals produced under the influence of Asia Minor, especially Pergamon (Fischer 1979: 150, type Ia, No. 52). In addition, at the bottom of the capital there is a "string" ("Strickwulst")—an extraordinary feature among the Palestinian capitals, except the more or less contemporary capitals from Chorazin, but which was, however, quite common in Trans-Jordan from the first century C.E. onwards.[23] The leaves of the second row are well emphasized and by joining of adjacent lobes they form geometrical motives as though in a continuation of growth of leaves in the first row, completed already at the end of the second century C.E. The tendency to turn elements into a part of a net is felt in these capitals. The way towards Byzantine and Moslem capitals opens with this type of capital. In later stages the formation of the combined "net" goes over the upper edges of the capital. The different motives pass, without barriers, to the *abacus*, and even to the architrave and further on.[24] It is difficult to find exact parallels to these capitals, but their artistic analysis

[21] Foerster (note 3), 122.

[22] As for example in one of the earlier Hellenistic heterodox capitals, cf. Schlumberger (note 7), 287, pl. XXVII,1.

[23] Schlumberger, *op. cit.*, 311–312, pls. XXXIV,3 XXXVI,1; Foerster (note 3), 123.

[24] Kautzsch (note 12), 112, figs. 350–353; R. W. Hamilton, *QDAP* 13 (1948), pls. XIII–XVI; Krautheimer (note 12), 238–239, figs. 184–185.

Pl. XXXIII. Corinthian Capital from Mazor.

clearly points to the transition point between the Roman and Byzantine eras, i.e. the third century C.E.

Type D (Pl. XXXVII) (Kohl and Watzinger 1916: figs. 11–12; Orfali 1922: Figs. 93–94). Two capitals of the doorjamb joining the courtyard and the synagogue hall. Both are composite capitals. The *calathus* of one of them is covered with a row of upright "flutes" ("Pfeiffenornament") which were very common in Asia Minor in the second century C.E. and in North Africa (especially Lepcis Magna) during the Severan period.[25] Our capital is surprisingly similar to a capital from Baalbec, belonging to a part of the building complex dated by an inscription, to the period of Caracalla.[26] The artistic workmanship of these two capitals is similar to the principles followed by the local artists who produced the stone and marble capitals of the second half of the second and the third century C.E.: i.e., elongated leaves, midribs shaped as deep grooves, the combination of minimal plasticity and emphasized background (and therefore the preferred combination with a fluted-leaves covered *calathus*). The poor working of the ovolo, the volutes, the *astragal* and the curled palmettes of the *echinus* are completed in one of the capitals (Pl. XXXVII) by the naive mistake in joining the tips of the lower lobe both with the tips of the lower lobe and with the tips of the middle lobe of the adjacent leaf (!), a quite outstanding example even among the phenomena of the local architectural decoration. Composite capitals having one or two rows of acanthus leaves with features of "Blattkelchkapitelle" were very common in Asia Minor during the second century C.E. In Ephesus, Asia Minor, there was a workshop specializing in this kind of capital which became the trademark for the presence of artists from Asia Minor even in Italy, Greece and North Africa.[27] The fact that Capernaum artists chose

[25] "Fluting and acanthus capital" called by J. B. Ward-Perkins, *JRS* 38 (1948), 68–70, fig. 11. This kind of capitals was examined in an exhaustive study by C. Börker, *Blattkelchkapitelle* (n.p., 1967).

[26] Weigand (note 17), 68, fig. 32.

[27] D. E. strong, *JRS* 50 (1960), 119–128, especially 127; *idem PBSR* 21 (1953), 124 and 149; Heilmeyer (note 7), 171–172. For an evolution of this kind of capital in Asia Minor see also R. Naumann and S. Kantar, apud *Kleinasien und Byzanz* (*Istanbuler Forschungen 17*) (Berlin, 1950), 106–110.

PL. XXXIV. Corinthian Capital: Capernaum, Type A.

these particular kind of capitals raises, again, the question of the relationship between the artist and the local art at the end of the use of classical formula.[28] This kind of capital was rather rare in the architectural material in Palestine in the Roman period, but over wide areas of Asia Minor this was the most common type, mainly during the second C.E. On the other hand these capitals became quite common during the Byzatine era, a fact which has so far been ignored by archaeological research.[29] Their appearance in the Capernaum synagogue points to the characteristics of the transitional stage between the Roman and Byzantine eras.

The location of capitals on doorjambs is a very rare phenomenon in Syrian–Palestinian architecture of the Roman period. They do appear, however, already on doors of Hellenistic sepulchral monuments and those influenced by them, for example Nabataean altars, building or temple gates or Palmyrene painted tombs. In Pompejan style II, which is considered a witness of Alexandrine architecture, such elements are visible too.[30] The uniqueness of this kind of decoration in Palestine has already been noticed by Kohl and Watzinger but, in my opinion more attention should be paid to it when considering the reciprocal influences in Palestinian architectural decoration

[28] Foerster (note 3), 123.

[29] But it is quite enough to go over the pictorial material of the different works concerning Byzantine architecture and art to become convinced of this fact. Cf. Krautheimer (note 12), *passim*.

[30] Façades of tombs decorated according to a kind of *"Scheinarchitektur"* in Hellenistic Marissa (Beth Gubrin, Israel), cf. J. P. Peters and H. Thiersch, *Painted Tombs in the Necropolis of Marissa* (London, 1905), tomb 1; similar in first century C.E. Palmyrene *"Hypogée des trois frères"* with its painted piers, cf. D. Schlumberger, *L'Orient hellenisé* (Paris, 1970), 88–92, fig. page 94; Nabataean examples collected by N. Glueck, *Deities and Dolphins* (New York, 1965), pls. 38b, 54a, 134b, 166b; 201a; see the Nabatean Negev, A. Negev, *IEJ* 24 (1974), 155, pl. 27 B (Oboda, portal of Acropolis, restored). One of the isolated later examples (end of the second century C.E.) is a portal of the Temple of Tyche at Sanamen, cf. Weigand (note 15), fig. 12; among the Galilean synagogues see pier like doorjambs with "torus" capitals at Horvat ha'Amudim, Kohl and Watzinger 1916; 72, figs. 138 and 142. For Pompeji see K. Schefold, apud B. Andreae and H. Kyrieleis (eds.), *Neue Forschungen in Pompeji* (Recklingshausen, 1976), 53–59.

Pl. XXXV. Corinthian Capital: Capernaum, Type B.

(Kohl and Watzinger 1916: 159, Fig. 290; Petra, Khazne).

We can briefly enumerate the features common to the Capernaum capitals: the *calathus* is covered with recurring pattern of acanthus leaves; the *calathus* itself is nowhere emphasized, not even along its borders, as was still the case at the beginning of the third century C.E. This emphasis is already lacking on the capitals from Mazor which, in my opinion, slightly antedate the Capernaum capitals (Fischer 1979: Nos. 298–301). The first row of acanthus leaves adheres to the *calathus* and hides it completely. The leaves are broad and their mid-ribs gather together both the lobe-ribs as well as the concavity of the tips. Thus a somewhat elongated leaf is produced. The leaves of the second row, emerging from behind the screen of short leaves, likewise closely adhere to the *calathus*. The way the lobes of the upper leaves are sometimes brought into contact recalls the capitals from Mambre and Mazor (Pl. XXXIII; Fischer 1979: Nos. 294–301). Both the *cauliculi* and the *calyces* are differentiated. This differentiation provides the criteria on which our classification of the capitals was based (see *supra*, p. 132). The inner leaves of the *calyces* are accentuated on most capitals by being slightly turned towards the upper tips of the leaves of the second row. This feature is characteristic of both the marble and local stone capitals of Palestine during the second–third centuries C.E. (Fischer 1979: 157–159, Pl. 79:3). The *helices* and the volutes adhere flatly to the *calathus* and are on the same level with its borders. The spiral lines are well worked and their centre is defined by a button. The *abacus* is simply profiled while its flower is richly accentuated with emphasis on its plasticity. This is also one of the features of the second and third centuries C.E. capitals. In most cases the flower is supported by a stalk that twists through the leaves into the *abacus*.

The working of the elements is another criterion in comparative artistic research. In this aspect, one should stress the flat-work of the elements which have been designed for definite plasticity since their first appearance in architectural ornament. The end of the

Pl. XXXVI. Corinthian Capital: Capernaum, Type C.

plasticity in vegetal ornamentation is a very important characteristic of late ancient art.[31] One can discern a certain inconsistency in this: some elements, such as flowers are accentuated in exaggerated plasticity in relation to the other elements of the capitals. Sometimes the leaves are emphasized as blown, "meaty" elements, independently worked, and as such, antedate a fairly common type of Byzantine capitals.[32] In this aspect the special working of the leaf is important. It becomes an element with elongated slightly pointed ends twisted towards the nearby lobes; this also antedates Byzantine characteristics. The leaf becomes an inflexible and static element. This transition to a new decorative structure has taken place over the Eastern Roman Empire.[33] From a technical point of view there is an intensive use of drill in the Capernaum capitals both for creating the differentiated elements and sometimes for intentional artistic features as was common during the second century C.E.[34] In Capernaum the use of a drill is noticeable mainly in capitals on which the *cauliculi* and the *calyces* are emphasized (Type A).

The Corinthian capitals of the Capernaum synagogue are an inseparable part of the artistic architectural framework in Palestine, based on local building material, during the second and third centuries C.E. In view of the preceding analysis these capitals can be placed in the "advanced" stage of the "orientalization" of the Corinthian capital: i.e., following the massive use of marble during the second century C.E., and after the formation of capitals made of local materials and which imitated the principles of widespread marble capitals.[35] Therefore, they can be well placed at the stage between the beginning of the

[31] A. Riegl, *Spätrömische Kunstindustrie* (Wien, 1927), 70–71.

[32] *Idem*, 75, fig. 10; Kautzsch (note 12), 143, fig. 457.

[33] Riegl, op. cit., 74; I. Nikolajević-Stojković, *La décoration architecturale sculptée de l'époque bas-romaine en Macédonie, en Serbie et en Monténégro* (Beograd, 1957), 75; E. Kitzinger, *Byzantine Art in the Making. Main Lines of the Stylistic Development in Mediterranean Art 3rd–7th century* (London, 1977), 77–78; Strube (note 12), 585–588, figs. 12 and 14.

[34] Riegl, op. cit., (note 31), 76, 132; D. E. Strong, *PBSR* 21 (1953), 149; Heilmeyer (note 7), 127.

[35] For the principles of this process see Avi-Yonah (note 20), 52–54.

Pl. XXXVII Corinthian Composite Capital: Capernaum, Type D.

third century C.E. and the capitals dated to the beginning of the fourth century C.E. They are a continuation of the well-recorded capitals from Amrit, Sebaste, Beth-She'an, Kedesh (Upper Galilee), a.s.o. (Pls. XXX–XXXIII),[36] but clearly precede in design and workmanship the early Byzantine heritage.[37] Yet, they are completely different from the types dated to the fifth and sixth century C.E.[38]

The fact that the Capernaum capitals are exceptional in this chronological complex, does not point to a special synagogue style,[39] but rather, proves a common characteristic of local capitals—originality and uniqueness. This is in line with the well-known fact that no two Corinthian capitals are exactly alike.[40] The Jewish symbols ornamenting some of the capitals are especially suited to the building they decorated. But it should be noted that Jewish monuments, including synagogues were decorated by elements having typical pagan symbols too.[41]

The capitals at Capernaum are only part of the architectural ornamentation. At the present stage of research, and lacking a general comparative study of the classical architectural ornamentation in Palestine, it is difficult to state categorically that there is a definite similarity between the capitals and other elements. Primary comparison does indeed show that they belong to one artistic and chronological complex (Kohl and Watzinger 1916: 147–173). If those elements

[36] See above, p. 132. The capitals of the Roman temple at Kedesh, Upper Galilee, represent together with its rich architectural details a very important chapter in the classical architecture of Palestine. Its erection and periods of use are well documented by inscriptions dated from the reign of Hadrian up to the end of the third century C.E. For our excavations see note 3.

[37] See note 12.

[38] Cf. Kautzsch (note 12), figs. 250 and 345; cf. also figs. 307–314 or Krautheimer (note 12), figs. 173, 184–185; see Kitzinger (note 33), figs. 140, 141, 144.

[39] Foerster (note 3), 123.

[40] Ibid.; Heilmeyer (note 7), 18–20.

[41] J. Braslavi, in *All the Land of Naphtali* (The Twenty-Fourth Archaeological Convention, October 1966) (Jerusalem, 1967), 106–129 (Hebrew).

do belong to the Capernaum synagogue we could conclude by stating that according to the comparative artistic analysis of the capitals, the building was constructed in the environs of the middle of the third century C.E. or shortly after it.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper is based on a chapter of my Ph.D. Thesis "The Development of the Corinthian Capital in Palestine from its Beginning until the Constantinian Period" (Tel Aviv, 1979), 323–334 (Hebrew) (quoted within the paper: Fischer 1979). The drawings (Figs. 1–2) were done by Miss R. Shevin. I am deeply thankful to Mrs. G. Doron and Mr. E. Heinemann for their help in the translation of the text.

The following titles are quoted in the text:

M. Fischer (1979) *The Development of the Corinthian Capital in Palestine from its Beginning until the Constantinian Period* (Tel Aviv) (Thesis submitted to the Senate of the Tel Aviv University for the degree "Doctor of Philosophy" (Hebrew, with English summary).

H. Kohl and C. Watzinger (1916) *Antike Synagogen in Galilaea* (Leipzig).

P. G. Orfali (1922) *Capharnaüm et ses ruines, d'après les fouilles accomplies a Tell-Houm par la Custodie Franciscaine de Terre Sainte* (1905–1921) (Paris).

Abbreviations:

Cathedra *Cathedra for the History of Eretz Israel and its Yishuv* (Hebrew)

PBSR *Papers of the British School at Rome*